Climate change

2657. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) when climate change is the phenomenon occurring world over, which part of the world or countries have been the worst hit or marginally hit and where our country stand;

(b) whether climate change can be tackled fully or it is beyond the reach of human being; and

(c) what could be the causes for climate change?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Current scientific understanding of the impacts of climate change on the various continents and regions at global scale are provided in the 4th Assessment Report of the Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change published in 2007. However, country-wise assessments are not available.

According to results of the various studies undertaken under the aegis of India's Initial National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), climate change may have adverse impacts in form of extreme weather events, water stress, glacial melt, sea-level rise that could flood coastal settlements, occurrence of vector disease, etc.

(b) and (c) Climate change is a long term phenomenon. It has occurred due to increase in concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere emitted through various human activities. It could be controlled by stabilizing the greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere by reducing emission of greenhouse gases having origin in human activities and enhancing the sources of sinks through afforestation.

Effects of GM brinjal

2658. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the positive and negative effects of Genetically Modified (G.M.) brinjal for commercial cultivation;

(b) whether it is a fact that G.M. foods would cause genetic modification in those who eat them;

(c) how far these G.M. foods are safe for consumers and environment; and

(d) whether there would be a due move on the part of the concerned for consultations with the scientists researchers, experts and other before taking a final view on this issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) As per the regulatory requirement, the applicant has undertaken extensive

biosafety assessment which includes environmental safety assessment as well as food and feed safety even if it has been approved for commercial cultivation in other countries. The environmental safety assessment includes studies on pollen escape out-crossing, aggressiveness and weediness, effect of the gene on non-target organisms, presence of the protein in soil and its effect on soil micro-flora, confirmation of the absence of Terminator Gene and baseline susceptibility studies. The food and feed safety assessment studies include composition analysis, allergenicity and toxicological studies and feeding studies on fish, chicken, cows and buffaloes. The biosafety data concludes that Bt brinjal is effective in controlling target pests, safe to environment, non-toxic in toxicity and animal feeding tests, non- allergenic and has potential to benefit the farmers.

(b) DNA is present in all living things such as plants, animals, microorganisms and is eaten by human beings with every meal. Most of it is broken down into more basic molecules during the digestion process whereas a small amount that is not broken down is either absorbed into the blood stream or excreted. So far there is no evidence to indicate that DNA from genetically modified foods has any additional risk to human health than DNA from conventional crops, animals or associated microorganisms that are normally eaten.

(c) The data generated on the safety, efficacy and performance of Bt brinjal conclude that Bt brinjal is safe for the consumers and the environment and is expected to provide enhanced economic benefits to farmers accrued from higher marketable yield and lower usage of pesticide sprays.

(d) As the Ministry has received strong views both in favour and against commercialization of Bt brinjal in India from various stakeholders including the State Governments, farmers, civil societies, NGOs and scientists, the Ministry has decided to hold national consultations with the stakeholders before a final view on the environmental release of Bt brinjal is taken.

Cases pending for environmental clearances

†2659. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:

SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases pending with the Central Government till date despite environmental recommendation of Maharashtra Government;

(b) if so, whether despite the permission of State Government for Ganpati Pule Commercial Complex in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra for construction of the complex is not being allowed and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether cost of project is rising due to delay in according approval; and

(d) by when this proposal is likely to be sanctioned?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.